



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/725,140	12/01/2003	Henry L. Restarick	2003-IP-011683 UI USA	2644
20558	7590	07/20/2006	EXAMINER	
SMITH IP SERVICES, P.C. 660 NORTH CENTRAL EXPRESSWAY SUITE 230 PLANO, TX 75074			BOMAR, THOMAS S	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3672	

DATE MAILED: 07/20/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/725,140

Applicant(s)

RESTARICK ET AL.

Examiner

Shane Bomar

Art Unit

3672

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 May 2006.
2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 and 15-103 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) See Continuation Sheet is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☒ Claim(s) 69-72 is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13, 15, 16, 23-34, 36-39, 49-51, 55-59, 75-84, 89-91, 95, 96, 102 and 103 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 01 December 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

Continuation of Disposition of Claims: Claims withdrawn from consideration are 17-22,35,40-48,52-54,60-68,73,74,85-88,92-94 and 97-101.

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the first passage extending from one end of the junction to the other and the second passage in communication with the first passage on both sides of the window must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

It is noted that the current drawings do not show the first and second passages in communication with each other because of the presence of the packers and seals, which is why the 35 USC 112, first paragraph, rejection was made in the previous Office Action. It is now seen from the description that the packers and seals in the junction are installed after the casing, with the junction already therein, is inserted into the wellbore. Therefore, since this appears to be an important aspect of the Applicant's invention, it is imperative that a drawing be submitted that only includes the elements of, for example, claim 1 without the packers, seals, deflectors, etc., that are installed at a later time. Were claim 1, for example, to be deemed allowable in its current state, such a requirement would be necessary because a drawing depicting the claimed limitations would need to be published.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure

must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

3. Claims 1-7, 10-13, 15, 23, 24, 29, 31, 34, 36, 38, 49-51, 55-59, 77, 81-83, 89-91, 95, 102, and 103 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US patent 6,354,375 to Dewey.

Regarding claim 1, Dewey discloses a wellbore junction comprising: a first passage 54/94 that extends from a first opposite end of the junction to a second opposite end of the junction; a window 38 is formed through a sidewall of the junction; and a second passage 56 is in

Art Unit: 3672

communication with the first passage on a first side of the window when liner 104 is not present and in communication with the first passage on a second side of the window when the plug 92 is not present (see Figs. 6 and 8 and col. 8, line 39-col. 9, line 37). The first passage forms a portion of a bore of the casing string 36 (see Fig 8), wherein the first and second passages are interconnected in the casing string 36 as the casing string is installed because the formation of the lateral wellbore is seen as a part of the installation process of the casing.

Regarding claims 2 and 3, passage 56 is clearly generally parallel to, and laterally offset from a longitudinal axis of, the first passage 54/94 (see Fig. 8).

Regarding claims 4 and 5, the second passage 56 is separated from the first passage by a single layer of material, and one of the junction sidewalls between passages 56 and 54 includes said layer (see Figs. 5 and 8).

Regarding claim 6, the second passage 56 is positioned external to a tubular that contains the first passage (see Figs. 5, 6, and 8).

Regarding claim 10, a liner string 104 extends through the window 38 and is secured in the first passage (via a packer 106) between the window and a fluid path providing communication between the first and second passages above the insert 50 when the fluid from wellbore 32 and wellbore 34 commingle (see Fig. 8 and col. 7, lines 38-43).

In view of an alternative embodiment in Figure 3, claims 1-5, 7, and 10 are also anticipated by Dewey wherein it is disclosed that the first passage is seen as extending from a first opposite end 32 of window 38 to a second opposite end 75, and the second passage 16 communicates with the first passage on both sides of the window; passage 16 is clearly generally parallel to, and laterally offset from a longitudinal axis of, the first passage; the second passage

Art Unit: 3672

16 is separated from the first passage by a single layer of material, said layer constituting a portion of the left sidewall of the junction, wherein the annulus between the insert 10 and the wellbore is a portion of the first passage; the second passage 16 is positioned internal to a tubular that contains the first passage; and a liner string 42 extends through the window 38 and is secured in the first passage (via liner hanger 72) between the window and a fluid path providing communication between the first and second passages above the insert 10 when the fluid from wellbore 32 and wellbore 34 commingle (see Figs. 1-3 and col. 7, lines 38-43).

Regarding claim 11, Dewey discloses a well system comprising: a wellbore junction positioned in a first wellbore 32 at an intersection between the first wellbore and a second wellbore 34, the junction having first and second passages 54/94 and 56 (the second passage is not clearly labeled, but is similar to that of the embodiment in Figures 5 and 6), respectively, formed therein, the first passage extending through the junction; and a liner string 104 extending through a window formed through the sidewall of the junction and having an end secured in the first passage by a packer 106, the string extending into the second bore 34, wherein the second passage provides communication between the first and second passages above the insert 50 when the fluid from wellbore 32 and wellbore 34 commingle, and communication between the first and second passages below the liner string end is always possible, although more so when plug 92 is removed (see Fig. 8 and col. 8, line 39-col. 9, line 37). The first passage forms a portion of a bore of the casing string 36 (see Fig 8), wherein the first and second passages are interconnected in the casing string 36 as the casing string is installed because the formation of the lateral wellbore is seen as a part of the installation process of the casing.

Regarding claims 12 and 13, a well tool, or tubular string such as coiled tubing, is inserted from above the second passage, through the second passage, and then below the second passage (see Fig. 8 and col. 6, lines 43-47).

Regarding claim 15, the first passage is clearly aligned with a longitudinal axis of the casing string (see Fig. 8).

Regarding claim 23, a first deflector 106 (note: there are two separate 106's, this is the lower one) is secured in the first passage to deflect the liner string 104 through the window (see Fig. 8).

Regarding claim 24, the second passage provides communication between the first and second passages above the deflector 106 when the fluid from wellbore 32 and wellbore 34 commingle, and communication between the first and second passages below the deflector is always possible, although more so when plug 92 is removed (see Fig. 8).

Regarding claims 29 and 31, the first passage extends through a tubular structure 90 and the second passage is internal to the structure (see Figs. 5 and 8).

Regarding claim 34, the second wellbore 34 is a branch wellbore (see Fig. 8).

Regarding claim 36, the tubular string 104 continues to the surface and is separate from passage 56, unless commingling is allowed; therefore, the string itself must act like an access control device because anything inserted into string 104 would not be able to enter passage 56, and vice versa (see Fig. 8).

Regarding claim 38, when fluids produced from both wellbores are allowed to commingle above the junction, then the fluid flow between the tubular string and the second passage is controlled, as is notoriously known in the art.

Regarding claim 49, the liner string end 106 (upper one) is secured in the first passage between the window and a first fluid path where the production fluids from the first and second wellbores via the first and second passages are allowed to commingle (see col. 7, lines 38-43).

Regarding claim 50, a deflector 106 (lower one) is secured in the first passage between the liner string end and a second fluid path 94 providing communication between the first and second passages, especially when the plug 92 is removed (see Fig. 8).

Regarding claim 51, the first and second passages clearly extend generally parallel to each other, especially at the upper portion of the junction (see Fig. 8).

Regarding claim 55, Dewey discloses a method of completing a well having first and second intersecting wellbores 32 and 34, the method comprising: installing a casing string 36 in the first wellbore 32 and interconnecting a first wellbore junction in the string; securing a first deflector 106 (lower one) in a first passage 54; and flowing fluid through the second passage 56 between the casing string on a first side of, or below, the junction and the casing string on a second side of, or above, the first wellbore junction, without retrieving the deflector because the deflector is a part of the wellbore junction and cannot be removed (see Fig. 8 and claim 29). The first and second passages are interconnected in the casing string 36 as the casing string is installed because the formation of the lateral wellbore is seen as a part of the installation process of the casing.

Regarding claims 56 and 57, a first liner string 104 is deflected off of deflector 106 and into the second wellbore 34, and the end of the string is secured in the first passage via a packer (upper element 106 in Fig. 8) before fluid is produced through the string.

Regarding claim 58, a tubing string is attached to the upper portion of string 104 and extends to the surface, the tubing string is conveyed through the casing string when element 104 is conveyed, therefore the two tubulars are engaged and provide fluid communication between each other when engaged; fluid communication is provided between the tubular string and the second passage when the fluids are allowed to commingle above the junction (see Fig. 8 and col. 7, lines 38-43).

Regarding claim 59, when fluids produced from both wellbores are allowed to commingle above the junction, then the fluid flow between the tubular string and the second passage is controlled by a flow control device, as is notoriously known in the art.

Regarding claims 77, 81, and 82, after the casing string 36 is installed, a fluid path permitting communication is formed between the first and second passages 54 and 56, especially before the string 104 is inserted or after the plug 92 is removed, which is equivalent to opening a flow control device (see Figs. 6 and 8, and col. 9, lines 14-33).

Regarding claim 83, after the casing string 36 is installed, fluid flow is permitted through passage 56 (see Fig. 8).

Regarding claim 89, Dewey discloses an apparatus for use in a wellbore comprising: a portion of a casing string 36; a longitudinal bore 94 of the casing string extending through the portion; and the casing string portion further including a flow passage 56 at least partially separated from the bore and providing fluid communication between first and second separated portions in the casing string portion (see Figs. 6 and 8). The first and second passages are interconnected in the casing string 36 as the casing string is installed because the formation of the lateral wellbore is seen as a part of the installation process of the casing.

Regarding claims 90 and 91, a plug 92 is positioned in the bore to prevent communication through the bore, and fluid communication is permitted between the first and second bore portions above and below the casing string portion (see Fig. 8).

Regarding claim 95, the plug acts as a flow control device since it is selectively retrieved for permitting or preventing flow through the passage.

Regarding claims 102 and 103, a window 38 is formed through a sidewall in the casing string portion, and the window provides access to a second wellbore 34 intersecting wellbore 32 (see Fig. 8).

4. Claims 1-6, 10, 11, 15-16, 23-25, 29-34, 36-39, 49-51, 55-59, 77, 81-84, 89-91, 95, 102, and 103 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US patent application publication 2002/0112857 to Ohmer et al.

Regarding claims 1, 10, 11, Ohmer et al disclose a wellbore junction comprising: a first passage 304 that extends from a first opposite end of the junction to a second opposite end of the junction; a window is formed through a sidewall of the junction; and a second passage 302 is in communication with the first passage on a first side of the window when sleeve 316 is open and in communication with the first passage on a second side (below plug 306) of the window (see Fig. 19 and paragraphs [0108-0111]), and further wherein a liner string for production is passed through the window and secured in the first passage between the window and a fluid path 320/322 that provides communication between the first and second passages above and below where the liner end is secured (see Fig. 19, the first sentence of paragraph [0108], and paragraph [0074]). The first passage forms a portion of a bore of the casing string (see Fig. 19), wherein the first and second passages are interconnected in the casing string as the casing string is

installed because the formation of the lateral wellbore is seen as a part of the installation process of the casing.

Regarding claims 2 and 3, passage 302 is clearly generally parallel to, and laterally offset from a longitudinal axis of, the first passage 304 (see Fig. 19).

Regarding claims 4 and 5, the second passage 302 is separated from the first passage by a single layer of material, and one of the junction sidewalls between passages 302 and 304 includes said layer (see Fig. 20).

Regarding claim 6, the second passage 302 is positioned external to a tubular that contains the first passage 304 (see Fig. 20).

Regarding claim 15, the first passage is clearly aligned with a longitudinal axis of the casing string (see Fig. 19).

Regarding claims 16, 23-25, 49, and 50, a first deflector, such as diverter 251, is installed in the casing string below the end of the liner to deflect the liner string through the window, and a second deflector is also installed since multiple branches that are below the first will use the same junction (see paragraphs [0092] and [0121]), wherein the second passage provides communication between the first and second passages above the deflector when the sleeve 316 is open, and communication between the first and second passages below the deflector is always possible, although more so when plug 306 is removed (see Fig. 19).

Regarding claims 29-33, the first passage 304 extends through a tubular cylindrical structure 308, the second passage is external to the structure above the window and in the vicinity of the valve, the second passage is internal to the structure below the plug 306, the

Art Unit: 3672

second passage is separated from the first passage by a single layer of material in the sidewall of the structure between the passages 302 and 304 (see Figs. 19 and 20).

Regarding claim 34, the second wellbore is a branch wellbore (see Fig. 19).

Regarding claims 36-38, the sliding sleeve 316 that covers opening 320 acts as an access control device for flow of fluid from the second passage to an interior of the tubular string (see Fig. 19).

Regarding claim 39, fluid is produced through passage 302 while fluid is injected through the branch of passage 304 (see paragraphs [0038] and [0048]).

Regarding claim 51, the first and second passages clearly extend generally parallel to each other, especially at the upper portion of the junction (see Fig. 19).

Regarding claim 55, Ohmer et al disclose a method of completing a well having first and second intersecting wellbores (see Fig. 19), the method comprising: installing a casing string in the first wellbore and interconnecting a first wellbore junction in the string; securing a first deflector, such as diverter 251, in a first passage 304; and flowing fluid through the second passage 302 between the casing string on a first side of, or below, the junction and the casing string on a second side of, or above, the first wellbore junction, without retrieving the deflector because the deflector is a part of the passage 304 and does not interfere with production through passage 302 (see claims 16-28). The first and second passages are interconnected in the casing string as the casing string is installed because the formation of the lateral wellbore is seen as a part of the installation process of the casing.

Regarding claims 56 and 57, a first liner string is deflected off of the deflector, such as 251, and into the second wellbore, and the end of the string is secured in the first passage before fluid is produced through the string.

Regarding claims 58 and 59, a tubing string 314 is attached to the upper portion of string after being conveyed through the casing string, therefore the two tubulars are engaged and provide fluid communication between each other when engaged; fluid communication is provided between the tubular string and the second passage when the sleeve 316, or flow control device, opens port 320 (see Fig. 19).

Regarding claims 77 and 81-83, after the casing string is installed, a fluid path permitting communication is formed between the first and second passages 304 and 302, by opening a flow control device 316, and also thereby allowing flow through and out of passage 302 (see Fig. 19).

Regarding claim 89, Ohmer et al disclose an apparatus for use in a wellbore comprising: a portion of a casing string; a longitudinal bore 304 of the casing string extending through the portion; and the casing string portion further including a flow passage 302 at least partially separated from the bore and providing fluid communication between first and second separated portions in the casing string portion (see Fig. 19). The first and second passages are interconnected in the casing string as the casing string is installed because the formation of the lateral wellbore is seen as a part of the installation process of the casing.

Regarding claims 90 and 91, a plug 306 is positioned in the bore 304 to prevent communication through the bore, and fluid communication is permitted through the passage 302 between the first and second bore portions above and below the portion (see Fig. 19).

Regarding claim 95, a flow control device 316 is used for permitting or preventing flow through the passage.

Regarding claims 102 and 103, a window is formed through a sidewall in the casing string portion, and the window provides access to a second wellbore intersecting the first wellbore (see Fig. 19).

5. Claims 1, 9-11, 26, 28, 55, 76-80, 89, 102, and 103 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by US patent application publication 2004/0159435 to Pluckeck et al.

Regarding claims 1, 10, 11, 55, 89, 102, and 103, Pluckeck et al disclose a wellbore junction comprising: a first passage interior of casing 902 that extends from a first opposite end of the junction to a second opposite end of the junction; a window is formed through a sidewall of the junction; and a second passage from string 935 to junction 920 is in communication with the first passage on a first side of the window outside of wellbore 932 and in communication with the first passage on a second side of the window inside of wellbore 932 (see Fig. 31A), and further wherein a liner string 935 for production is passed through the window and secured in the first passage between the window and a fluid path that provides communication between the first and second passages above (outside the wellbore 932) and below (inside the wellbore 932) where the liner end is secured (see Fig. 31A and associated description). A method of completing the well is also disclosed wherein a deflector 912 is installed in the casing string and the second passage can produce fluid from below the junction to the first passage outside of the junction without retrieving the deflector (see claims 20-40 and paragraph [0076]). The first and second passages are interconnected in the casing string as the casing string is installed because the formation of the lateral wellbore is seen as a part of the installation process of the casing.

Regarding claims 9, 26, 28, and 76, the wellbore junction 920 and the second passage 935 are expanded in the well (see paragraph [0076]).

Regarding claims 77-79, another fluid path is formed between the first and second passages by cutting through the junction, wherein the cutting tool must be deflected somewhat to continue straight down to the deflector and not follow the tubular 935 into wellbore 932 (see Figs. 31A-31B).

Regarding claim 80, perforating tubing 937 with a perforator can form the path between the first and second passages, wherein there is no flow of fluids through either path until the perforations are formed (see Fig. 31C and paragraph [0077]).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 39 and 84 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dewey.

Regarding claim 39, Dewey teaches the system of claim 11 above that includes first and second passages, wherein fluid is produced via one of the two passages. However, it is not explicitly taught that a second fluid is injected into the well via the other passage not producing. Yet, it is taught that while wellbore 34 is being produced through the first passage, coiled tubing is inserted through the second passage 56 (see col. 6, lines 43-47). At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that fluid could be injected

Art Unit: 3672

through said coiled tubing as is notoriously known in the art. One would have been motivated to make such a modification because the injection of fluids through coiled tubing is a widely known method for stimulating production zones in a well, which Dewey describes as the purpose for inserting the tubing anyway.

Regarding claim 84, Dewey teaches the method of claim 83 that includes permitting fluid flow through the second passage. However, it is not expressly taught that the permitting step includes retrieving a plug from the passage. Yet, it is taught that passage 94 is opened by retrieving plug 92 so that access to the bore below the passage may be obtained (see col. 8, lines 45-48). At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that a plug like 92 could also be placed in passage 56 and retrieved when fluid flow through the passage is required. One would have been motivated to add the plug to passage 56 to ensure that the subsequent well tools or coiled tubing are not able to pass through the passage before the time they are needed, or to keep production fluid from wellbore 32 blocked until a desired time after insertion of the junction. Furthermore, the well tool and/or coiled tubing that passes through the passage for the purpose of stimulating the production of wellbore 32, will inherently plug up the passage and the fluid will not be able to flow through until the tool and/or tubing is removed.

8. Claim 84 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohmer et al.

Ohmer et al teach a method that is obvious over this claim for analogous reasons as set forth above in view of Dewey.

9. Claims 8, 27, and 75 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Plucheck et al.

Plucheck et al teach the wellbore junction and method of claims 1, 11, and 55 from above wherein the junction and the second passage are expanded in the wellbore (see the rejection of claims 9, 26, 28, and 76). Although it is not explicitly taught that the first passage, which is through casing 902, is expanded, the expansion of casings within a wellbore is notoriously known in the art. Therefore, at the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that the first passage could also be expanded. One would have been motivated to do this so that smaller casing could be used and then expanded downhole, thereby alleviating the need to under-ream the borehole while still having a cased borehole with a large enough diameter to accommodate the downhole wellbore tools needed.

10. Claim 96 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dewey or Ohmer et al in view of US patent 6,561,277 to Algeroy et al.

Both Dewey and Ohmer et al teach the apparatus of claim 89 that further includes a flow control device, wherein Ohmer et al further teach that the device is a valve. However, neither reference expressly states that the flow control device is a safety valve.

Algeroy et al teach a multilateral wellbore junction similar to that of the above references. It is further taught that multilateral wellbore junctions are used in conjunction with safety valves, such as valve 506 in Figure 1. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Dewey or Ohmer et al and Algeroy et al before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the apparatus taught by Dewey or Ohmer et al to include the flow control device that is a safety valve of Algeroy et al, in order to obtain selective prevention

Art Unit: 3672

of fluid flow under dangerous or adverse conditions in the borehole. One would have been motivated to add a safety valve, such as Algeroy et al's valve, to either of the Dewey or Ohmer et al apparatuses because it is notoriously known in the art that safety valves are a necessary and beneficial part of most any wellbore system to aid in preventing damage to equipment and danger to personnel.

Allowable Subject Matter

11. Claims 69-72 are allowed.

Response to Arguments

12. Applicant's arguments, see pages 24-25, filed May 8, 2006, with respect to the 35 USC 112 first and second paragraph rejections have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejection of all claims under 35 USC 112 has been withdrawn. However, as noted above, the drawings must include the subject matter claimed wherein the first and second passages of the junction are in communication without the packers, seals, deflectors, etc.

13. Applicant's arguments filed May 8, 2006 with respect to the 35 USC 102 and 103 rejections have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The Applicant has amended the claims to show that the junction is configured for interconnection in the casing string as the string is installed, and thus has argued that the references to Dewey, Ohmer, and Pluckeck cannot anticipate the amended claims because the prior art apparatuses are installed in the casing string after the string is installed. However, installation of the casing string is a broad concept that can cover many aspects involving the placement of the casing within the wellbore. The construction

Art Unit: 3672

of the lateral wellbores of the prior art can very well be considered a part of the installation process of the casing string, especially if the string and lateral will not be cemented until the lateral has been completed. A possible way to more positively recite what the Applicant appears to be claiming would be to further amend the claims so that the junction is interconnected (not configure to be interconnected, which means the junction only needs to be capable of interconnection) in the casing string prior to, or simultaneously with, installation or run-in of the string.

Conclusion

14. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).


A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

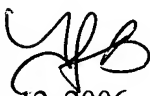
Art Unit: 3672

15. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Shane Bomar whose telephone number is 571-272-7026. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Thursday from 6:30am to 4:00pm. The examiner can also be reached on alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Bagnell can be reached on 571-272-6999. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


David J. Bagnell
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Art Unit 3672

tsb

July 12, 2006